

CONNECTION

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Missouri School for the Blind

3815 Magnolia Avenue

St. Louis, MO

Inside this issue:

From the Superintendent - P. 2

Track Stars - P. 2

Our Donors - P. 3

WalMart Makeover - P. 4

How You Can Help - P. 4

Calendar - P. 5

Page 1

Vision-Specific Technology Enhances Student Learning at School for the Blind

Over the summer, Missouri School for the Blind renovated its computer lab and upgraded “vision specific” technology. In addition to a complete facility renovation of the computer lab, MSB was able to upgrade all student computers in the lab and move older computers out to classrooms for student use. The project included purchase of “state-of-the-art” software and equipment for use by students individually and in the lab and classrooms.

OAITSD (Office of Administration Information Technology Service Division, State of Missouri) also enabled MSB to establish a separate student network and domain. All of these improvements were made to increase visually impaired students’ ability to read, write and access data and to give teachers more options to differentiate instruction based on individual students’ needs.

This project was made possible by support from Missouri Lions clubs and benevolent contributions to the Blind Trust Fund.

MSB is hosting a technology weekend Nov. 12-13 to introduce students and their parents to new equipment and software. Contact Asst. Supt. [Joyce Waddell](#) for more information.

Here is a summary of MSB’s technology project:

- 2 SMART Board interactive whiteboard systems, one installed in an elementary classroom and the other in the new technology classroom. The SMART board engages students with multiple learning styles and incorporates visual, tactile and auditory learning. It also incorporates educational software and SMART Response interactive wireless remotes.
- 10 64-bit HP computers equipped with Windows 7 and 22” flat-screen monitors.
- 10 multi-positional desks that can be raised or lowered or swung right or left to accommodate students of different sizes or those using wheelchairs or braces.
- 8 portable refreshable Braille displays that enable users to read in Braille what is on the computer screen.
- 8 Braille Notes with speech and refreshable Braille display plus a multitude of applications - recorder, book reader, word processor, planner, internet access and navigation.

- 8 PEARLs that convert text to speech or Word documents; maker Freedom Scientific calls them “portable reading solutions.”

Photo: Students with low vision look forward to SMART Board lessons that are interactive and provide a variety of stimuli.

Photo: Elementary teacher Chris Klevorn uses the SMART Board for vocabulary, sight words, math concepts and communication arts and can adjust the size, color and contrast to meet students’ visual needs. She says she has only just begun to learn the system’s full capabilities.

Photo: Computer teacher Wayne Seitz demonstrates how the “desk fits the kid,” by re-positioning the top and keyboard.

Photo: MSB student DeVaughn Smith practices his keyboard skills at one of the school’s 10 new lab computers.

Photo: Refreshable Braille display

Photo: Student Kathryn Hurd tries out one of the new BrailleNotes with refreshable Braille display. Teacher Patti Schonlau says the device is a “fantastic tool” for both pupils and instructors as it gives them instant feedback.

Photo: PEARL “portable reading solution”

Page 2

From the Superintendent

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the first edition of CONNECTION, our Missouri School for the Blind quarterly newsletter. CONNECTION (as defined by Webster) means that something is linked, associated, or there is a relationship. As we strive to meet the educational needs of blind/visually impaired students, I value our “connections” with school districts across the state of Missouri, other agencies/stakeholder groups, and our parents. It is our mission to provide quality services for blind/visually impaired students. We cannot do it without you! Thank you for your support and interest in MSB!

Sincerely, Patty Yocum

MSB Track Stars Take Second at Conference Meet

MSB's track team took second place against nine other schools at the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind (NCASB) conference track and field meet at Tennessee the weekend of Sept. 30. MSB scored a total of 249 points, coming in behind Tennessee's 323, and ahead of Arkansas (224) and Indiana (198).

MSB's girls scored 142 points, just four less than the conference-winning girls from Arkansas. Individual gold medalists were: Tabitha Jenkins, 1600 yard run; and Amanda Drake, long jump; silver medalists were: Meghan Chirchirillo, shotput; Amanda Drake, 1600 yard run; Kathryn Hurd, 600 yard run and 1200 yard tandem; Emily Pope and Carolyn McGhee, 4x200 relay; bronze winners were: McBroom, 800 yard run; Amanda Drake, shotput; Tabitha Jenkins, Alex Richardson, 1600 yard run; Carolyn McGhee, long jump, and Emily Pope, shotput.

Missouri's boys team scored 107 points, coming in third behind Tennessee and Indiana. Gold

medalists were: Trevon Graves, shotput and high jump, and DeVaughn Smith, long jump and 60 yard dash. Silver medals were won by Trevon Graves, Michael Babusa, 1600 yard run; Brynn Haines, 600 yard run and 1200 yard tandem, and DeVaughn Smith, triple jump. Michael Babusa received a bronze in the 600 yard run.

All athletes contributed points to the winning total. Coaches are Athletic Director Tim Cobb (boys team) and Paul Ehresman (girls team).

Photo: MSB Track Stars, left-right, front row: Alex Richardson, Jill McBroom, Kathryn Hurd; middle row: Michael Babusa, Trevon Graves, Tabitha Jenkins, Amanda Drake, Emily Pope; back row, coach Paul Ehresman, DeVaughn Smith, Brynn Haines, Josh Starnier, Meghan Chirchirillo. Not pictured: Carolyn McGhee.

Page 3

Upcoming Workshops at Missouri School for the Blind

MSB is hosting two workshops in November, the first for educators and the second for students and their parents:

- ♦ *"Tools for the Assessment & Development of Visual Skills (birth to age 5)"* will be held Wednesday, Nov. 9, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. The workshop will focus mainly on using the ToAD and TADPOLE kits, which have a dual function as assessment materials and as tools for the development of visual skills. For information contact [Yvonne Ali](#), 314-776-4320, ext. 3256.
- ♦ *"Try It Out,"* a free technology weekend, will be offered Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 12-13, to blind/visually impaired students grades 6-12 and their parents. For information contact [Bridget McKenna](#), 314-776-4320, ext. 2141.

For additional information on workshops and training go to http://www.msb.dese.mo.gov/prof_dev.htm or contact Outreach Coordinator [Jennie Mascheck](#), 314-776-4320, ext. 1250.

Thanks to Our Donors

Missouri School for the Blind thanks the following individuals and organizations who have donated financial support to the school between January 1, 2011 and September 30, 2011. If we do not show your donation below, please accept our apologies and contact our Community Relations office so can correct the omission. Unfortunately, we are unable to list donations of goods and services at this time.

In Memoriam

Bertes Clayton

Gunelda Clayton * Albert Crump * Ralph Haslag * Judy Honse
Terry Schwartze * Thomas, Birdsong, Mills & McBride

Janet Kinney

Cozean Memorial Chapel

Mary Powers

Tomey Swan * R. Dolores Muehling

Mary Karen Towers

Kenneth Smith

Donations

Belton Lions Club * Chesterfield Lions Club * Jerry Clemons
Concord Village Lions Club * Delta Gamma Foundation * Fenton Lions Club
Margaret M. Fletcher Foundation * Becky Henderson * House Springs Lions Club
Kansas City World Outreach Lions Club * Lake St. Louis Lions Club
Lemay-J.B. Lions Club * Lions Club of Woodson Terrace * Lions District 26M1
Lions District 26M2 * Lions District 26M5 * Maplewood Lions Club * Moscow Mills Lions
Club New Melle Lions Club * O'Fallon Lions Club * Overland Lions Club * James Riley
Daryl Sohn * St. Charles First Capitol Lions Club * St. Charles Lions Club
St. Ferdinand Township Lions Club * St. Louis Midtown Lions Club * Shirley Wasserman

Page 4

WalMart Makeover!

Photos of renovation.

On one of the hottest days of one of the hottest summers on record Cliff Eckhoff (father of MSB senior Leticia) and his team of helpers from WalMart remodeled MsB's, our student-operated on-campus store. First they took out all the old fixtures and mopped and painted the store. Then they installed new shelving, decorative backing, coolers, counters and lunch booths. It looks fabulous! Plus, they donated all the equipment and for-sale items! A huge THANKS to the WalMart makeover team (most of whom are posed above): George, Scott, Terry, Shelly, Samantha, Chrissy, Todd, Joe, Andre, Michael, Doug, Rhonda, Chris, Frank, Richard, James and Cliff (photo). Thank You - You're the Best!

Two Ways You Can Help MSB

Here are two ways you can help fund some of MSB's special programs:

The MSB Student Council coordinates the Box Tops For Education program and will collect, trim, bundle and submit the Box Tops for reimbursement; they already have earned \$348 this school year. Send the box tops to Desiree Morris or James Baker at MSB. For a complete list of the 300+ eligible products go to <http://www.boxtops4education.com/earn/clip/Brands.aspx>.

Another way to support MSB is through Schnucks' eScrip Community Card program. Every time you make a purchase and swipe your eScrip card, Schnucks will contribute up to 3% of your total grocery purchases to MSB. Schnucks eScrip Community Cards are available free at the courtesy counter at any Schnucks market. Register your card by calling 800-931-6258 or visit <http://www.escrip.com/schnucks.jsp> or simply call Carole Sohn at MSB, 314-776-4320, ext. 1132.

Page 5

Calendar

November

Grade Cards/Progress Notes Due	11/2
Awards Assembly	11/3
Conference Goalball Meet at Wisconsin	11/4-6
Daylight Savings Time Ends	11/6
Veteran's Day Assembly	11/11
Professional Development, No Classes	11/21-23
Thanksgiving Holidays, No Classes	11/24-25
Junior Beta Club Convention	11/30-12/2

December

Wrestling/Cheerleading Meet at Indiana	12/2-4
Wrestling/Cheerleading Meet at MSB	12/9-11
Christmas Extravaganza	12/22
Christmas Day	12/25
Christmas Holiday, No Classes	12/26
Winter Break, No Classes	12/27-30

January

New Year's Day	1/1
New Year's Holiday, No Classes	1/2
Last Day of Winter Break	1/3
Professional Development Days, No Class	1/4 – 6
Classes Resume	1/9
Dr. M.L. King Holiday, No Classes	1/16
Conference Wrestling/Cheerleading Meet at Arkansas	1/20-22
Awards Assembly	1/26
Hand-In-Hand Session II	1/25-26

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CONNECTION is available on MSB's website, via email or in alternative formats upon request.
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